

Michael F. Easley  
Governor



State of North Carolina  
Office of the Governor

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Contact: Renee Hoffman  
Phone: 919/733-5612

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**GOV. EASLEY SEEKS SBA DISASTER DECLARATION FOR COLUMBUS COUNTY**  
*Move will provide federal aid to businesses and homeowners who had damage from Nov. 16 tornado*

**RALEIGH** – Gov. Mike Easley announced today that he has asked the federal Small Business Administration for a disaster declaration for Columbus County to help pay for repairs and other expenses related to damages resulting from the severe weather that battered the state on November 16. If approved, the declaration will make low-interest loans available to citizens and business owners to pay for repairs and other costs related to recovery.

“While the tornados were not widespread, they did severe damage to the Riegelwood community,” said Easley. “There are a number of citizens who lost everything and they need help to recover.”

The Governor’s request follows the work of damage assessment teams that visited the county earlier today. The assessment in Columbus County identified 25 or more homes or businesses that sustained 40 percent uninsured losses. Fifteen homes in Columbus County were destroyed, five had major damage and 15 suffered minor damage. Citizens in Columbus County who experienced property damage would qualify for low interest Small Business Administration loans, based on this request from the Governor.

The Community Foundation of Southeastern North Carolina has set up the Riegelwood Disaster Relief and Recovery Fund to provide long-term assistance to the people hardest hit by this disaster. Tax deductible contributions are being accepted immediately and can be sent directly to the Community Foundation at 321 North Front Street, Wilmington, NC 28401, or visit the Foundation’s website at [www.communityfoundationsenc.org](http://www.communityfoundationsenc.org).

People can also make donations to the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army and designate the donation for the “Riegelwood tornado.”

Anyone with questions about the status of the recovery or how to donate to the relief effort can call the Governor’s Emergency Bilingual Hotline at 1-888-835-9966 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

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